

WORST OF SINNERS

Request: “Pat Robertson recently made a comment regarding the Haitians earthquake as God punishing them. He made a similar comment on the Katrina hurricane of New Orleans. Many view him as a spokesperson for conservative Christianity. Could you shed some light on why some Christians would consider these people as the worst of sinners because of certain types of disasters?”

My Response: Mr. Robertson’s consistency shows a doctrinal belief that he applies to situations involving a group of people he assumes are the Worst of Sinners.

Jesus addressed this very problem in our lesson text and gave the theological answer.

The theological concept of ‘Worst of Sinners’ was used **twice** in our lesson text. It is developed by the Greek preposition para + accusative of comparison plus pas (aplm). It is translated into the English as ‘greater than all’ or ‘worst sinner’ in Lk.13:2, 4.

- Who presented the **first** disaster? _____ (Lk.13:1) _____
- What argument was proposed? _____ (Lk.13:1)
- What theological conclusion did Jesus give? _____ (Lk.13:2-3)

- Who presented the **second** disaster? _____ (Lk.13:4) _____
- What argument was propose?__ _____ (Lk.13:4)
- What theological conclusion did Jesus give? _____ (Lk.13:4-5)

We will study four aspects of Jesus’ answer to the theology of “Worst of Sinners”.

1. There are three important points to each of the two disasters that Jesus used to correct the theology of “Worst of Sinners”.

Jesus used a special phrase to introduce the two disasters and the false assumption of “Worst of Sinners” – “do you suppose that” (dokeo / p.a.ind.2pl hoti) (Lk.13:2, 4). It was used to introduce a false doctrinal assumption.

Galilean temple disaster	(Lk.13:1a)	Current history
False assumption	(Lk.13:2)	Greater sinner (hamartolos) than others worshippers
Corrected theology	(Lk.13:3)	No (ouchi / emphatic negative) - repent or perish

Tower of Siloam disaster	(Lk.13:4a)	Current history
False assumption	(Lk.13:4b)	Greater debtor (opheiletes) than others workers
Corrected theology	(Lk.13:5)	Unless (ean / 3cc + me) [not / volition] - you repent (metaneo / p.a.subj.2pl) [Change your mind] – you will all likewise (pas homoios) perish (apollumi / f.m.ind.2pl).

2. Pilate did three things that nearly caused a national insurrection in Israel. Two of these three things are mentioned in our lesson text.

The third was displaying his prized golden Roman military shield that had the names of the Roman pagan gods in his royal palace on Mt. Zion. Roman Emperor ordered him to remove it.

3. An erroneous doctrinal is challenged by Jesus related to these two current disasters.

The erroneous doctrine says that the severity of the suffering was directly correlated to the degree of the sinfulness of some people (para+acc of comparison) [greater sinner than all others] (John 9:1-2).

Job's three friends held this same erroneous doctrine (legalism). (Job 4:7-8) "Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it." [Eliphaz believed that the innocent does not suffer but the worst of sinners do].

Paul referred to himself as the first or foremost or chief (protos) sinner (1 Tim.1:15). Paul is saying that he was at the head of the class of sinners. However this in itself is not doctrinal correct.

Apparently Paul was making a hyperbole regarding his unsaved status in order to make the point that God will save anyone – "And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."

4. Doctrinally every member of the human race is a classified sinner because of AOS with the exception of Jesus Christ.

(2 Cor.5:21) Therefore all of mankind is under the same 13 judicial charges of AOS as a sinner (Rom.5:12-21) [imputed sin]. "This is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." (Rom.1:15)

"There is none righteous, not even one." (Rom.3:10; Ps.53:1-3) "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom.3:23)

Legalism confuses the sinner, being the result of imputed sin (AOS) and sinfulness, the result of inherent sin (Lk.15:1).

5. Jesus used the occasion to give the good news of the gospel of grace salvation to those in attendance (Rom.5:12-21).

Notice that Jesus didn't get caught up in condemning Pilate or those who died in the two disasters. **Notice also that Jesus addressed the YOU in the crowd rather than the THEM of disaster.** He focused on the crowd's greater need to be saved than His need to straighten them out doctrinally.

Notice 2 Greek grammar changes, but the same advise in (Lk.13:3, 5): "I tell (lego / p.a.ind.1ps) **you** (su / dplm), NO (ouchi), but (alla) [contrast] unless (ean / 3cc + me) **you repent** (metanoeo / p.a.subj.2pl / a.a.subj) **you will ALL** (pas) likewise (homoios/ adverb / hosautos/) perish (apollumi / f.m.ind.2pl)."

6. Repent or Perish

Repent (metanoeo) means to 'change your mind' about the object of your salvation (message of gospel and mechanic of grace salvation) (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9; John 10:28).

Perish (apollumi) has different meanings in English. Thus there isn't one simple definition for it. Luke 15:4, 8 (lost); John 3:16; 2 Pet.3:9 (spiritual perish); Matt.8:25; 26:52 (physical perish); Matt.27:20 (put to death); Mark 1:23-24 (destroy / demon); Rom.14:15 (destroy / CWL); 2 Pet.3:6-7; Heb.1:10-12 (destroy / heavens and earth).

Perish was used in our passage to refer to people dying in the two disasters. But the message was for those who had the wrong doctrinal idea about them. They were no WORST A SINNER than those in that crowd or in this one.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom.3:23)